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## METHODOLOGY OF ALIGNING THE SINAITICUS, CURETONIANUS, PESHĪTTĀ AND HARKLEAN TEXTS

BY  
George Anton KIRAZ

This paper constitutes a report on the CESG project which aims at producing a comparative edition of the Syriac Gospels (CESG) aligned under each other.

### A. INTRODUCTION

'No branch of the Early Church has done more for the translation of the Bible into their vernacular than the Syriac-speaking'<sup>1</sup>. In fact, within the first six centuries of the Christian era, the Syriac Fathers managed to produce no less than six different versions of the New Testament; viz., the Diatessaron, the Old Syriac Gospels, the Peshīttā, the Philoxenian, the Harklean, and the Syro-Palestinian (the latter being in Christian Palestinian Aramaic), not to mention the long series of lost revisions which brought the Old Syriac into closer line with the Greek Gospels in the final form of the Peshīttā version<sup>2</sup>. The immensity of their scholarship succeeded in keeping modern New Testament scholars very well occupied with discerning the numerous issues related to the interrelationship of these various translations and revisions; in the words of B. M. Metzger,

Of all the early versions of the New Testament, those in Syriac have raised more problems and provoked more controversies among modern scholars than any of the others. The reasons lie partly in the multiplicity of translations and revisions of the Syriac Scriptures, and partly in the ambiguity of evidence con-

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1) Eberhard NESTLE, 'Syriac Versions', in Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, IV (1902) 645.

2) For a review of the Syriac translations and revisions of the New Testament, see Bruce M. METZGER, *The Early Versions of the New Testament, their origin, transmission and limitation* (Oxford, 1977), Chapter One. The issue of the Philoxenian/Harklean problem is discussed by Sebastian P. BROCK, 'The Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harklean Problem', in E. J. EPP & G. D. FEE (eds.), *New Testament Textual Criticism, Essays in Honour of B. M. Metzger* (Oxford, 1981) 325-43.

cerning their *mutual relationship*<sup>3</sup>. (Italics mine).

The purpose of this project is firstly to provide a tool that may be of help in resolving some of the problems and controversies raised by the multiplicity of translations and revisions of the Syriac Gospels. Secondly, it aims to facilitate the study of their mutual relationship. The necessity of such a tool is due to the practical difficulties currently facing the scholar in accessing the desired texts simultaneously and at a glance. This is best exemplified in the case of the Old Syriac texts: although excellent editions of the Sinaiticus palimpsest and the Curetonianus manuscript have been produced by Lewis<sup>4</sup> and Burkitt<sup>5</sup>, respectively, both editions pose practical difficulties for the scholar whose main concern is to compare the two texts. Lewis had collated the Curetonianus against the text of the Sinaiticus, whereas Burkitt had done the reverse by taking Curetonianus as the collational base<sup>6</sup>. It has already been suggested by Kahle<sup>7</sup> that the two texts ought to have been edited along the lines of Julicher's *Itala* in order that the differences between them be made clear. Even before Lewis and Burkitt had produced their editions, Bonus<sup>8</sup> had taken one step towards this direction and compiled the variants of both texts, in addition to those of the Peshittā, in three adjacent columns.

An additional difficulty facing the scholar arises from the poor quality of the standard Harklean text. Whereas a good critical edition of the Peshittā Gospels exists based on forty-two manuscripts edited by Pusey and Gwilliam<sup>9</sup>, the text of White's<sup>10</sup> edition of the Harklean leaves much to be de-

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3) METZGER, *The Early Versions*, p. 3.

4) Agnes Smith LEWIS, *The Old Syriac Gospels or Evangelion da-Mepharreshe, being the text of the Sinai or Syro-Antiochene palimpsest, including the latest additions and emendations, with the variants of the Curetonian text, corroborations from many other MSS., and a list of quotations from ancient authors* (London, 1910).

5) Francis Crawford BURKITT, *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe, the Curetonian Version of the Four Gospels, with the readings of the Sinai Palimpsest and the early Syriac Patristic evidence*, 2 volumes (Cambridge, 1904).

6) In BURKITT's case, this was due to an accident of editorial history: he 'took over a commission originally given to R. L. BENSLY who had been asked to produce an edition of Curetonianus before the Sinaitic palimpsest was discovered'. Matthew BLACK, 'The Syriac Versional Tradition', in K. ALAND (ed.), *Die Alten Übersetzungen des Neuen Testaments, Die Kirchenväterzitate und Lektionare* (Berlin, New York, 1972).

7) Paul KAHLE, *Cairo Geniza* (Berlin, 1962) 302ff.

8) A. BONUS, *Collatio Codicum Lewisiani rescripti evangeliorum sacrorum Syriacorum cum codice Curetoniano* (Oxford, 1896).

9) P. E. PUSEY and George Henry GWILLIAM, *Tetraeuangelium Sanctum juxta simplicem Syrorum versionem ad fidem codicum, massorae, editionum denuo recognitum* (Oxford, 1901). The basic text of this edition was republished by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1905, 1920 and in subsequent editions. The same text was adopted by the

sired<sup>11</sup>.

This CESG edition brings together the texts of the Sinaiticus (S), Curetonianus (C), Peshittā (P) and Harklean (H), aligned under each other in a manner which allows the scholar to access them all in one glance.

The texts provided in the CESG edition are based on the aforementioned standard texts of S, C, and P. Inasmuch as a reliable edition of H is lacking, the CESG provides a new text based primarily on one of the earliest witnesses to the text, Vatican Ms. Syr. 268, thought by Mai<sup>12</sup> to have been written by Thomas of Harqel himself. Though Hatch<sup>13</sup> attributes its date to A.D. 858/9, it is more likely that the manuscript is earlier (eighth or early ninth century). This latter text was kindly prepared for the purposes of the present edition by Dr Andreas Juckel.

The lost texts of the Diatessaron and the Philoxenian have no place in the CESG. In the case of the former, this is because of the absence of an acceptable standard reconstruction of the text. Although there have been attempts to reconstruct the Diatessaron, most notably in the Spanish Polyglot<sup>14</sup>. New Testament scholarship is far from having produced an acceptable reconstruction, even if that be at all possible. In the case of the Philoxenian, no trace of the Gospels has come down to us, except in the form of citations in the later works of Philoxenos himself<sup>15</sup>. The Syro-Palestinian version<sup>16</sup> is also not included, primarily because it represents an independent

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United Bible Societies' edition of the Syriac Bible in the 1988 and subsequent editions, reformatted in two columns; alas, the Syriac chapter divisions, ܬܡܝܬܐ, were omitted.

10) J. WHITE, *Sacrorum Evangeliorum Versio Syriaca Philoxeniana* (sic) (Oxford, 1778).

11) The Text of John was edited by G. H. BERNSTEIN, *Das Heilige Evangelium des Iohannes. Syrisch in Harklensischer Übersetzung, mit Vocalen und den Puncten Kuschoi und Rucoch nach einer vaticanischen Handschrift, nebst kritischen Anmerkungen* (Leipzig, 1853).

12) Angelo MAI, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, V (part 2) (Rome, 1831) 4-5.

13) William HATCH, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Boston, 1946), plate LXIX.

14) Ignacio ORTIZ DE URBINA, *Vetus Evangelium Syrorum, et exinde excerptum Diatessaron Tatiani (Biblia Polyglotta Matritensis, series VI; Madrid, 1967)*. For a critical study of the limitations of this work, see Robert MURRAY, 'Reconstructing the Diatessaron', in *Heythrop Journal*, 10 (1967) 43-9.

15) For Philoxenos' works, see André DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie* (Louvain, 1963). See also André DE HALLEUX, *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique (Ms Br. Mus. Add. 14.534)*, CSCO 380/381 (syr. 165/166), (Louvain, 1977), and J. W. WATT, *Philoxenus of Mabbog. Fragments of the Commentary on Matthew and Luke*, CSCO 392/393 (syr. 171/172), (Louvain, 1978).

16) A. LEWIS and Margaret DUNLOP GIBSON, *The Palestinian Syriac Lectionary of the*

translation from the Greek and does not seem to have played a role in the history of the development of the Syriac texts<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, it is composed in a dialect which differs from Syriac, viz. Christian Palestinian Aramaic.

It must be stated that the purpose of this work is merely to provide the scholar with a tool; hence, neither investigating the Greek behind the Syriac<sup>18</sup> (apart from few places where it seemed crucial for the alignment – see *infra*) nor providing citations from patristic literature, though crucial for the study of the development of the texts, falls within the scope of this project.

## B. PROJECT HISTORY

The idea of producing this work arose during the academic year 1990-91 while I was reading for the degree of Master of Studies in Syriac Studies under Dr Sebastian P. Brock, at the University of Oxford (Wolfson College). During study sessions on the textual relationship of the various Syriac versions of the Bible, Dr Brock suggested the compilation of a comparative edition of the Gospels based on the standard editions of the Sinaiticus (S), Curetonianus (C) and Peshittā (P). The Harklean (H) was initially excluded because of the lack of a reliable edition of its text.

A preliminary proposal was submitted to E. J. Brill in 1991. Later that year, Prof. Bruce Metzger, co-editor of *New Testament Tools and Studies*, responded encouragingly and kindly accepted the CESG into his series. The original proposal aimed at editing the texts of S, C and P in three adjacent columns with special Sigla to mark the differences between them. Later, however, inspired by the work of Aland and Juckel<sup>19</sup>, a decision was made to align the texts under each other. After discussions with Dr Andreas Juckel, it was also decided to incorporate H into the CESG, and he kindly agreed to prepare a special text for this purpose.

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*Gospels, re-edited from two Sinai MSS. and from P. de Lagarde's edition of the 'Evangelium Hierosolymitanum'* (London, 1899).

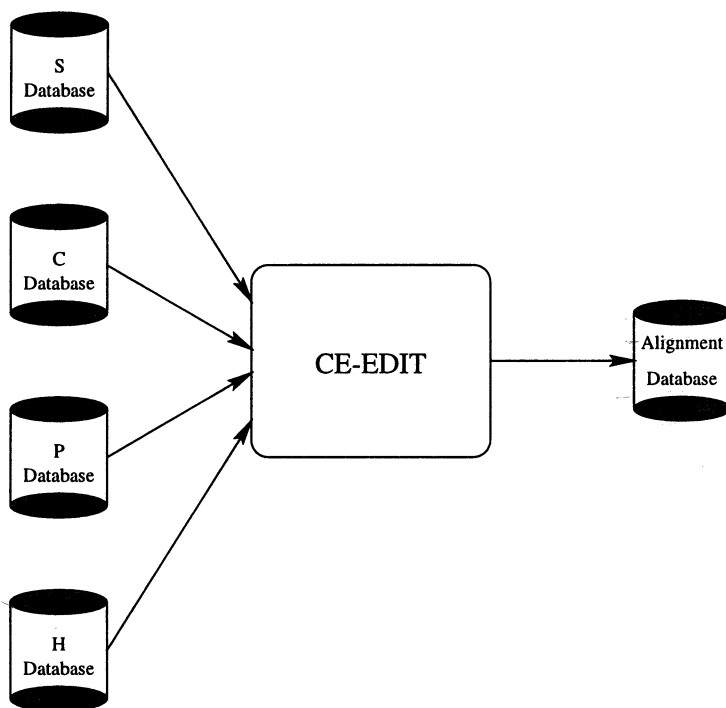
17) Matthew BLACK, however, concludes that the Palestinian Syriac has some Diatessaric influence. See Matthew BLACK, «The Palestinian Syriac Gospels and the Diatessaron», in *Oriens Christianus* 36 (1941) 101-11.

18) For the limitations of Syriac in rendering the Greek, see Sebastian P. BROCK, «Limitations of Syriac in Representing Greek», in Bruce METZGER, *The Early Versions*, pp. 83-98.

19) B. ALAND and A. JUCKEL, *Das Neue Testament in Syrischer Überlieferung*, in *Arbeiten zur Neutestamentlichen Textforschung* (Berlin, New York, 1986-).

Work began in the summer of 1992 by entering the texts on the computer. The texts were proofread later that year against the original standard editions and were imported into the *Syriac Electronic Data Retrieval Archive* (SEDRA)<sup>20</sup>.

During 1993, a prototype of CE-EDIT (i.e. comparative edition editor) was designed, developed and tested. The program reads a particular verse from multiple textual databases (input), displays the texts on the screen, and allows the user to align them interactively. The alignment information (output) is maintained in another database as illustrated below<sup>21</sup>.



20) For the description of SEDRA, see George KIRAZ, «Automatic Concordance Generation of Syriac Texts», in René LAVENANT, S.J. (ed.), *IV SympSyr 1992*, OCA 247, pp. 461-75.

21) The original plan was to design a program that automatically aligns the texts with relative accuracy, then have the alignments manually tuned using CE-EDIT. After experimenting with manual alignment, however, it was found that it takes 30-60 minutes to align the texts of one chapter interactively (depending on its complexity and length) using CE-EDIT directly.

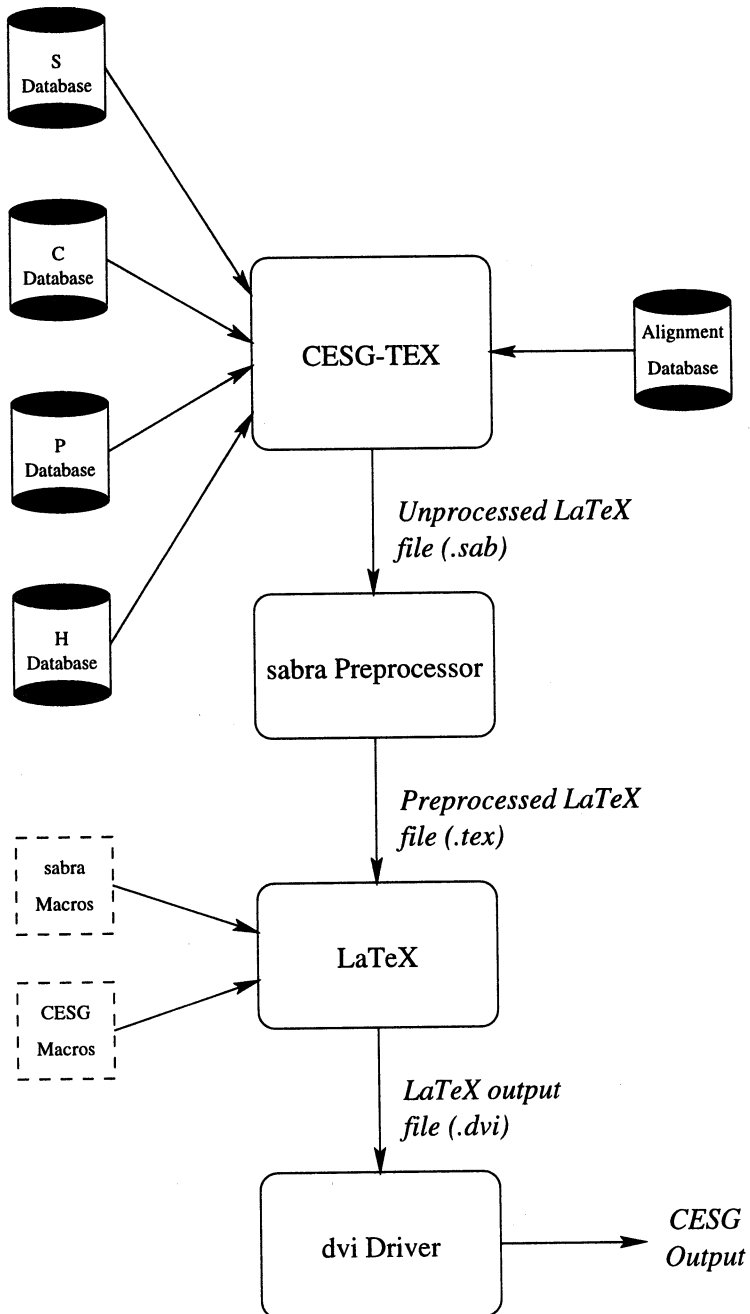
The alignment process took place in 1994. The following year, the prototype program, CESG- $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  was written. The program reads the alignment database and the various textual databases, and outputs a file suitable to be processed by the  $\text{L}^{\text{A}}\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$ <sup>22</sup> typesetting system using the *sabrâ* package<sup>23</sup>, a set of Syriac fonts and macros. The process of producing the output is illustrated in the following diagram (next page).

The same year, an announcement was placed on the internet requesting participants to proofread the texts for the second time. About twenty replies were received. The edition was completed by the end of 1995.

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22) L. LAMPORT,  $\text{L}^{\text{A}}\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  – *A Document Preparation System-User's Guide and Reference Manual* (Reading, 1985).

23) Y. HARALAMBOUS, '«سَبْرَا» (Sabra), A Syriac  $\text{T}_{\text{E}}\text{X}$  System', in George KIRAZ (ed.), *SyrCOM-95 Proceedings of the First International Forum on Syriac Computing (in association with Syriac Symposium II), June 8, 1995*, The Catholic University of America, Washington D.C. (Cambridge, 1995) 3-23.







...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Ⓢ S
×	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	×	וְהָיָה כִּי	אֶלֶּה	אֶלֶּה	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓟ P
אֶלֶּה	הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה	וְהָיָה כִּי	×	אֶלֶּה	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓜ H

If a verse is omitted in the text, however, it is represented by ×'s throughout, e.g. S in Mk 9.44.

Punctuation marks are not typeset next to the words that precede them, but rather are aligned in columns in the same manner as the text, e.g. '·' after אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים (P) and ':' after אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים (H) above.

The inside headers indicate the versions which appear on each page in the following form: SCPH (i.e. all versions appear on the page). If a version does not appear at all, its siglum is omitted: SPH (i.e. C does not appear on the page). When a version partially appears, its siglum is shown between parentheses: (S)PH (i.e. S is partially wanting and C does not appear).

Footnotes bear chapter and verse numbers and may contain multiple notes, each preceded by the siglum of the relevant version.

#### D. ALIGNMENT METHODOLOGY

The CESG alignment is controlled by two general rules in the following order of precedence: 1. Maximising correspondences; i.e. in each verse, the texts are moved horizontally (left or right) until the maximum number of correspondences is found. 2. Having P as the driving force behind word order, as illustrated in the following example (Lk 14.21):

הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	×	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓢ S
הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	×	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓢ C
הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	×	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓟ P
הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	×	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓜ H

The next example (Mt 4.1) illustrates the precedence of the two rules. Here rule 2 is abandoned for the sake of rule 1, for if אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים in H aligned with its allies in the order versions, two alignments (viz., אֶלֶּה and אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים) would be sacrificed:

אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	×	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓢ S
אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓢ C
אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓟ P
×	×	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	אֶלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים	Ⓜ H



the alignment, e.g.  $\text{ܐܠܗ}$  and  $\text{ܐܠܗܐ}$  in Mk 10.29:

$\text{ܐܠܗ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗ}$	: ܐ S
$\text{ܐܠܗܐ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗ}$	: ܐ P
$\text{ܐܠܗܐ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗ}$	: ܐ H

• Compounds that occur as one word in some versions but as two words in others are aligned in one column, e.g.  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  and  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  in Mt 25.41:

$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ S
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ P
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ H

The same applies to enclitics such as  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  and  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$ , and to compounds that are semantically related, e.g.  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  and  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$ .

• Where two phrases do not match, but occur between aligned text, both are aligned under each other, e.g.  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  and  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  in Mt 5.32:

$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	×	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ S
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	×	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ C
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	×	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ P
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ H

• In the case of H, consideration was given to the Greek behind the Syriac. In Mt 18.12, for example,  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  in H is not aligned with its allies in C and P because  $\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$  in H corresponds to  $\text{τινι}$ , while in C and P it corresponds to  $\text{ανθρωπω}$ .

$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	×	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ S
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	×	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ C
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	×	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ P
$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	$\text{ܐܠܗܐܡܪ}$	: ܐ H

## E. CONCLUSION

Currently (September 1995) we are in the final stages of proof-reading. The edition is due for publication in November of this year, and will come

out either at the end of the year or the beginning of next year.

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#### ADDENDUM

After this paper was presented, the CESG project was completed. The aligned texts are published in George Anton KIRAZ, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels, aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshîṭā and Harklean Versions*. Volumes 1-4. E. J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, 1996. ISBN 900410419 4 (set).